

# Chronicles of Food Protection

[www.vdacs.virginia.gov/fdsafety](http://www.vdacs.virginia.gov/fdsafety)

September 2005

Greetings! Learn about National Food Safety Education Month and how to evaluate your food products in the event of a power outage in this issue of Chronicles of Food Protection. Also, learn about numerous on-line food security resources available to you, ranging from managerial training and pre-developed presentations for you to use in teaching your employees about food security, to model food security and recall plans.

## Food Security

### NIMS Training

The National Incident Management System (NIMS) provides a consistent nationwide template that enables all government, private-sector, and non-governmental organizations to work together during domestic incidents, no matter what the cause (terrorists, weather, etc.). You can learn more about NIMS through a Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) Independent Study Program entitled, IS-700 National Incident Management System, An Introduction.



The course is available on-line and explains the purpose, principles, key components, and benefits of NIMS. For more information on this course visit the Web site below.

<http://training.fema.gov/emiweb/IS/is700.asp>

## Recall Information

Those in the food and beverage business must be prepared to deal with emergencies. The best way to do this is to anticipate problems and create a plan for recalling problematic products. However, the first step in this process is not planning, but rather prevention. It makes sense to do everything possible now to avoid having an emergency situation in the first place.

Evaluate your establishment to minimize the possibility of producing and distributing a contaminated or unsafe food product. This is comparable to conducting a vulnerability assessment for a food security plan. (For more information on conducting vulnerability assessments, see the next article below.) Since there is always a possibility of producing and distributing a contaminated or unsafe food product, containment of this type of an event is a worthy goal. This is where the ability to remove products quickly and effectively from the market becomes vital to your business and where a good recall plan comes into play.



Luckily, the University of Florida, in conjunction with the Association of Food and Drug Officials (AFDO), has recently made a Food Recall Manual available on-line to provide industry and regulators useful information and guidance in conducting a food recall and in developing a corresponding plan. The manual contains recall notification templates, action checklists, information on Class I, II, and III recalls, effectiveness checks, and a host of other recall information. To access this manual go to <http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/FS108>.

AFDO also has an upcoming workshop on Product Recall October 5 - 6, 2005 in Baltimore, MD. The Product Recall program will teach you the basics of what you need to know about recalls, but it certainly doesn't stop there. This workshop is a day-and-a-half of intense learning — what's new in product recalls, how you can save your organization money in the process, the latest advances, who is responsible for what. You'll then have an opportunity to put it into practice in a recall exercise. For more information, visit the AFDO Web site at [www.afdo.org](http://www.afdo.org) and go to the Training and Events page.



## Food Security Resources

There are several food security resources available through the Food Safety Inspection Service (FSIS) Web site to help you educate your staff on the importance of food security and to assist your facility in conducting a food security assessment and a corresponding food security plan. Materials include an industry self-assessment checklist, a food security plan worksheet, and model food security plans. While model plans may not be specific to your type of facility, there is still a lot of valuable information that you can use in developing a plan for your facility. For more information, visit the following Web site.

[www.fsis.usda.gov/Food\\_Security\\_and\\_Emergency\\_Preparedness/Security\\_Guidelines/index.asp#Plans](http://www.fsis.usda.gov/Food_Security_and_Emergency_Preparedness/Security_Guidelines/index.asp#Plans)



## Food Safety

### National Food Safety Education Month

September marks the 11th annual National Food Safety Education Month (NFSEM), created by the National Restaurant Association Educational Foundation's International Food Safety Council. This year's theme is **"Keep Hands Clean with Good Hygiene."**

During September's National Food Safety Education Month, you have the opportunity to highlight what you are doing in the food industry to educate your employees on proper food safety procedures. Perhaps you will want to conduct a food safety training class, promote NFSEM in your company newsletter, institute a best food safety idea contest with an award for the best ideas to improve food safety in your establishment, or incorporate short activities into

your weekly staff meetings. Activities to reinforce proper preparation practices and procedures, proper handwashing, proper hand maintenance, proper use of gloves, personal cleanliness and proper attire, and employee illness are available at [www.nraef.org/nfsem/default.asp](http://www.nraef.org/nfsem/default.asp), along with a variety of other promotional and educational training materials.

## Emergency Contacts

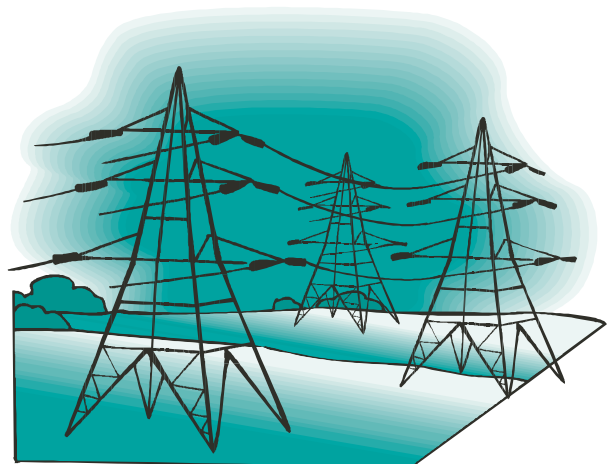
As we all know, hurricane season is here again. Do you know who to contact if there is a flood, power outage, damage to your facility due to falling trees, or any other disaster that may jeopardize the food in your establishment?

Your local Food Safety and Security Office can help you determine the disposition of foods that may have been contaminated with flood waters, damaged by heat in a fire, or exposed to the elements during structural damage. Be sure to post the number of one of our local offices in a conspicuous place and call us when disaster strikes. Our Food Safety Specialists and office staff are here to help.

<b>Northern and Central VA</b>	<b>804-786-3520</b>
<b>Southwest VA</b>	<b>540-857-7344</b>
<b>Tidewater VA</b>	<b>757-363-3909</b>

If you experience a disaster situation after normal working hours (8:15 a.m. – 5 p.m.), call 911. The dispatchers should be able to notify a representative from our office to provide assistance.

## TIPS FOR POWER OUTAGES



## When there is a power outage:

- Note the time at which the power outage begins. Discard food products that are in the process of being cooked, but which have not yet reached the final temperature.

### Actions that can keep food safe for several hours include:

- Keep refrigerator and freezer doors closed as much as possible.
- If practical, group packages of cold food together to reduce heat gain.
- Cover open refrigerated and frozen food cases, especially vertical displays.
- Do not place hot foods in refrigerators or freezers.
- Use “canned heat” under foods on electric steam tables to help maintain potentially hazardous foods (PHF) at 135°F.
- Use ice and/or ice baths to rapidly cool small batches of hot food.

### Discontinue food preparation if any of the following conditions exist:

- Inability to properly wash, rinse, and sanitize utensils.
- No hot water, inadequate water pressure.

### When the power is restored:

- Identify PHF that may have been in the temperature danger zone.
- Check the internal food temperature.
- If practical, separate packages of food in refrigeration units and freezers to allow for faster re-cooling.

Use the recommended charts on the following page to determine the disposition of PHF.

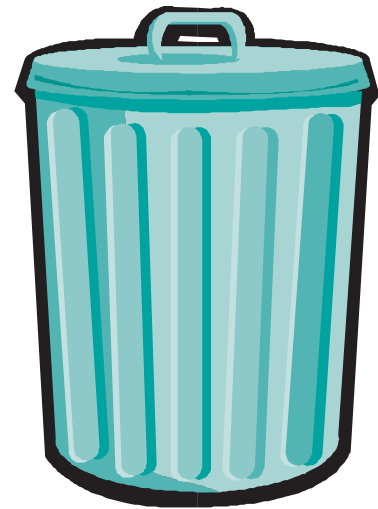
## Reopening your Establishment—

If you voluntarily closed your facility, you should verify the following conditions prior to resuming food preparation and/or sale of potentially hazardous foods:

- All unsafe PHF has been discarded. If you have questions regarding the safety of specific foods, contact your local Food Safety and Security Office.
- Electricity and gas services have been restored.

- All circuit breakers have been properly reset as needed.
- All equipment and facilities are operating properly, including:
  - Lighting
  - Refrigeration
  - Hot holding
  - Ventilation
  - Toilet facilities
- Hot and cold potable water under pressure for hand-washing and proper dishwashing is available.

If your facility was closed by VDACS, it must remain closed until you obtain official approval from us to reopen.



## Disposal of Food—

PHF that have been subjected to unsafe temperatures prior to the power outage might not be safe to eat even if the procedures in the tables on the back page are followed. **WHEN IN DOUBT, THROW IT OUT.**

- If you must discard food, document the type and amount of food and the reason for disposal for insurance and regulatory purposes.
- Small volumes of food to be discarded can be denatured with a cleaning product (such as bleach) and placed in the outside refuse bin.
- To discard large volumes of food, contact your refuse disposal company or your local landfill operator for disposal instructions.
- If there are any questions regarding the safety of specific foods, contact your local VDACS Food Safety and Security Office.

# Recommendations for Determining the Disposition of Potentially Hazardous Food Products

## Refrigerated PHF

If power has been out:	Check the temperature of product when refrigeration is restored.		
	If 45°F or less	If 46°F to 50°F, product must reach 41°F within:	If over 50°F
1 hour	May be sold—reduce temperature to 41°F ASAP	3 hours	Cannot be sold.
1½ hours		2½ hours	
2 hours		2 hours	
2½ hours		1½ hours	
3 hours		1 hour	
3½ hours		½ hour	
4 hours		0 hours	
4+ hours		Cannot be sold. Discard.	

## PHF in Hot Holding Units

Duration of Power Outage	Food below 135°F in Hold Holding Units When Power is Restored
2 hours or less	1. May be sold if reheated to 165°F and then held at 135°F or above; or 2. May be sold if rapidly cooled to 41°F or below within 2 hours following restoration of power.
More than 2 hours	Cannot be sold

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